

NEFIRS News

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It's that time again!

The end of the year is fast approaching (where did the year go!!). That means it's time to once again bury me in NEFIRS reports. Hopefully, the electronic submissions will outweigh the paper ones but I'll take them however I get them.

Reminder 1: After December 31, 2003 the only reports that will be accepted using the old reporting system are reports for 2002 incidents. Starting January 1, 2004 ALL incidents for 2004 and future years MUST BE SUBMITTED USING NFIRS 5.0 (either paper or electronically for software users).

Reminder 2: If you use software to complete your reports your data MUST be sent electronically. You must either copy the exported data file to a floppy disk and mail to me or send the file as an email attachment. We will NOT accept paper reports from software. The only paper reports we will accept are those completed on copies of the Master Forms each department received when they were trained.

Software Upgrades

I'd like to remind those using software of the importance in staying up to date with the latest software version. Changes are made to the reporting system at least annually. Vendors will send those departments who purchased maintenance/tech support free upgrades to their software automatically (or they are supposed to).

In order to stay in compliance with reporting requirements please be sure that you purchase a maintenance/tech support agreement and that you install all upgrades you receive from your vendor. Failure to stay in compliance with

reporting requirements could result in our not accepting data from your department.

If you have Internet access and only want software that meets the reporting requirements - no extras like equipment maintenance, personnel training, fire hydrant location, etc - you may want to consider using the Federal Data Entry Tool instead of a vendor's software. The software is free except for the cost of your Internet connection. For more information on this software go to www.nfirs.fema.gov and scroll down to the Users section in the links. Go through the tutorial which will show you how to download, install and use the software. If this looks like what you want, go ahead and register for the software. I check about every day or so to see if anyone has registered and when I find new registrations activate them so they can download the software.

Wildland Federal Agency Codes

When completing the Wildland Module, if you indicate the land is federally owned in the Property Management field you will be required to enter a Federal Agency Code. These codes were omitted from the handbook and quick reference guide. Below are the codes for Nebraska that should be used.

NEAFP	USDI-NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (Agate Fossil Beds NM)
NECLR	USDI-FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (Crescent Lake)
NEFNR	USDI-FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (Ft. Niobrara FNR)
NEHOP	USDI-NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (Homestead NM)
NENBF	USDA-FOREST SERVICE Nebraska NF NE)
NENPR	USDI-FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (North Platte)
NERBR	USDI-FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (Rainwater Basin WMD)
NESBP	USDI-National Park Service (Scotts Bluff NM)
NESLR	USDI-FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (Sand Lake)
NEVAR	USDI-FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (Valentine)
NEWBA	USDI-BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (Winnebago Res.)

NFIRS 5.0 Reminders

NOTE: References to fields and sections are by the names the USFA gave the objects. Some software vendors changed the names and/or locations. Hopefully you will still understand what I am referring to. If not, let me know.

◆ The EMS module is only allowed for Incident Types 100-243, 311, 321-323, 351-381, 400-431 and 900. If you need to complete an EMS module for an Incident Type other than stated above you may want to take another look at the chosen code and make sure it is the appropriate one to describe the incident.

◆ If a fire rekindles and you return to the scene a new incident report will need to be completed. This is considered a new incident and should be treated as such although you can indicate it is a rekindle of a previous fire by entering code 72 in the field Factors Contributing to Ignition on the Fire Module. Any dollar loss would be for any new damage done by the rekindle. Do not include the dollar amount previously reported on the original incident.

◆ I've had a couple of questions on how to enter a Canadian address. In Appendix C of the Handbook there are Canadian postal codes listed but I have discovered the federal system isn't set up yet to accept them. I have checked with the NFIRS Help Desk and you should be able to enter OO (two letter O's not zeros) in the state field. Then you will need to enter the entire city and state information in the City field.

If you are using a vendor's software and they allow you to choose the Canadian postal codes go ahead and select them and I'll deal with any errors that may occur when I receive the data.

◆ There are two parts to Section C On-Site Materials on the Fire Module. If you are completing paper, you may enter up to three codes but you must also check one of the four corresponding boxes on the right. If using software, you should have a field to enter the On-Site Materials code and another field to indicate the type of material (bulk storage, processing or manufacturing, packaged goods for sale, or repair or service).

Completion of this field is also only required if the Property Use coded on the Basic Module is in the 500, 600, 700 or 800 series of codes.

◆ Software users: Please include your FDI D number and timeframe in the filename (example: 99001June02.txt). Having this information in the filename helps to locate the right file if needed.

◆ The incident number is a numeric field. Do NOT enter an alpha or special character (-, /). If you use software it will probably allow you to do this, but your report will not be easily retrieved if it even can be retrieved. If you are adding letters to your incident number in order to keep them separate, e.g., fires from rescue calls, you could do this by starting fire calls with 1 or 03 (last two digits of the year) and rescue calls with 2 or 2003 or some other numbering scheme. You may also be able to accomplish what you are trying to do by using text in the incident number by utilizing the Station field and/or the District field.

◆ The intention of the Exposure Number field on the Basic Module is not to enter the number of exposures that may have occurred. If there are exposure fires, a separate report needs to be completed for each exposure. The incident number would be the same on all reports but the exposure number would change - 000 for the original, 001 for the first exposure, 002 for the second, etc.

◆ WE WILL ACCEPT PAPER REPORTS IN NFIRS 5.0!! We know it is not feasible for everyone to buy a computer and software.

◆ This is sent to the chief but I know that the chief isn't always the one completing the reports. Please be sure to pass this on to the person who is completing the reports so they can fill the reports out correctly. THANKS!!